

**PPI** Prevention Partnership International  
A Division of Family Resources International

Date: August 22, 2007

To: Assembly member Jim Beall, Chair  
The Assembly Select Committee on Alcohol and Substance Abuse  
From: Rosemary Tisch, Director PPI

As discussed today, a large gap exists between individuals with addiction disorders and those receiving treatment. But there is one additional factor that needs to be addressed - most of these individuals are in their early 20s, not receiving treatment until they are 30s.<sup>i</sup> This is a crucial, as this is the age when they are most likely to be parents. "Addicted parents are one of the most underserved populations. They are from diverse backgrounds with one common goal and similarity: to improve parenting skills in order to reunify as a family."<sup>iii</sup> Treatment for the addicted individual is not sufficient - it must include a family component for their children and their caregivers (significant other, grandparents, aunts/uncles). Why?

- o Children are ultimately at risk to continue cycles of addition, abuse, and violence: 80% of all child maltreatment cases involve parental misuse of alcohol or drugs;<sup>iii</sup> genetic factors play a major role in the development of alcoholism - almost one-third of any sample of alcoholics has at least one parent who was or is an alcoholic; in addition children's poor school performance, sexual promiscuity and increased health care costs are all related to their parents' addiction.<sup>iv</sup>
- o Two thirds of juveniles in detention report that a member of their family abused substances.<sup>v</sup>
- o The best place for children is with their birth families, when safe. Individuals with substance abuse have underlying issues of addiction, recovery, relapse, inappropriate boundaries, and improper limitations.<sup>vi,vii</sup> In addition, recovery parents must cope with children's issues of abandonment, parental incarceration, parental involvement, and resulting behavioral and emotional problems.<sup>viii</sup>

Parenting in recovery programs for the whole family need to be recognized as part of treatment, by California's Alcohol & Substance Abuse Action Plan. Parents with the disease of chemical dependency, love their children - they do not know how to appropriately show it.

Drug Dependency courts already learned the lesson that "just" getting parents sober is not enough –.

- o Treatments that involve family result in
  - o Higher levels of abstinence (50 vs. 30%)
  - o Fewer drug related arrests (8 vs. 28 %)
  - o Fewer inpatient treatment episodes (13 vs. 35%).<sup>ix</sup>
- o Programs for substance abusing parents are associated with lower risk levels for child maltreatment; improved parenting skills, knowledge, competence, parental psychosocial adjustment, parental self-esteem and increased parent-child interaction.<sup>x</sup>
- o Family-focused interventions are effective in (1) reducing children's conduct disorders and aggression; (2) improving children's social competencies, peer resistance skills, school bonding, school performance; and (3) improving family conflict, bonding, organization and cohesion.<sup>xi,xii</sup>
- o Family programs consistently demonstrate effectiveness in improving parenting skills, reducing child maltreatment, and improving children's well-being in randomized trials.<sup>xiii</sup>

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this letter. I am happy to answer any questions or talk with you further. I can be reached at 408-406-0467 or [rstisch@aol.com](mailto:rstisch@aol.com)

Sincerely,

*Rosemary*

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### Bio on Rosemary Tisch

Mrs. Tisch is Director of Prevention Partnership International and lead author for numerous curriculums addressing addiction and children including *Celebrating Families!*<sup>™</sup>, *SCRIPS*, the *YWAS* series, *START of California* and *Keys to Healthy Living*. Rosemary was the founder of Kids Are Special and Family Education Foundation, nonprofits focusing on the prevention of substance abuse in high-risk populations: children of alcoholics/addicts, sexually active teens, and individuals with learning differences and those exposed in utero to alcohol and other drugs. Group models have been successfully replicated throughout the US, Mexico, and Russia.

In Santa Clara County, she was the chair of the Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Clinic Development Committee and the Co-Chair of the Santa Clara County Community Learning Assessment Task Force. She has been a member of the March of Dimes Health & Policy Committee, past President of the National Prevention Task Force, served on the Vestry and Community Ministries Board for St. Andrews' Episcopal Church and was a member of the Alcohol & Drug Master Plan Review committee, serving as chair of the Perinatal Focus Group. Honors include: 2007 Crystal Bowl Winner, Outstanding Community Volunteer by Junior League of San Jose, 2001 selection as one of three Women Who Care by South Bay Accent; and the Penny Golden Rule Award. Ms. Tisch holds Master Degrees in Counseling Psychology from Stanford University and in Piano Performance from College of Notre Dame. She is married with two grown daughters.

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### Endnotes:

<sup>i</sup> National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, 2007.

<sup>ii</sup> Plasse, B.R. (1995). Parenting groups for recovering addicts in a day treatment center. *Social Work*, 40(1), 65-74

<sup>iii</sup> Child Welfare League of America, 2005.

<sup>iv</sup> National Association for Children of Alcoholics.

<sup>v</sup> Research and public policy series. No. 67: Alcohol, drugs and crime : A study of juveniles in detention. Jeremy Prichard and Jason Payne Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology: 2005.

<sup>vi</sup> Plasse, B.R. (1995). Parenting groups for recovering addicts in a day treatment center. *Social Work*, 40(1), 65-74.

<sup>vii</sup> VanDeMark, N.R., Russell, L.A., O'Keefe, M., Finkelstein, N., Noether, C.D., & Gampel, J.C. (2005). Children of mothers with histories of substance abuse, mental illness, and trauma. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 33(4), 445-459.

<sup>viii</sup> Giancola, P.R., Mezzich, A.C., Clark, D.B., & Tarter, R.E. (1999). Cognitive distortions, aggressive behavior, and drug use in adolescent boys, with and without a family history of a substance use disorder. *Psychology of Addictive Behaviors*, 13(1), 22-32

<sup>ix</sup> Science Practice Perspectives. Vol. 2 No 2 August 2004 NIDA.

<sup>x</sup> Learning From Evidence-Based Practice. Harvard Family Research Project October 2006

<sup>xi</sup> Kumpfer & Alvarado 2003; Brestan & Eyberg 1998; Center for Substance Abuse Prevention 1998; Kazdin 1993; 1995; Kumpfer 1999b; Kumpfer & Alvarado 1998; Liddle & Dakof 1995; Serketich & Dumas 1996; Taylor & Biglan 1998; Webster-Stratton & Taylor 2001.

<sup>xii</sup> Kumpfer & Alvarado 2003; Biglan & Taylor 2000; Taylor & Biglan 1998.

<sup>xiii</sup> Taylor & Biglan 1998, Webster-Stratton & Taylor, 1998; 2001